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ABSTRACT

A task force was appointed by the Oregon Council for the Social Studies (OCSS) to study preschool/kindergarten through grade 3 social studies in Oregon and to make recommendations as to what OCSS could do to help improve social studies education. This report contains the findings and recommendations of the task force. A background statement based on a review of contemporary and historical developments in early childhood social studies education is presented. A section on demographic trends points out implications for social education. The findings from a survey of approximately 200 teachers and teachers-in-training and the results of data collected from 24 hour-long interviews with individual teachers are reviewed and a summary of the analyses is presented. The task force offered four recommendations based on its findings. First, undertake efforts to clarify the purpose and parameters of the social studies, such as: (1) finding reasons for teaching it; and (2) defining its boundaries. Second, design ways to propagate experiential teaching materials and strategies. In particular, join forces with a latent curriculum integration movement among teachers and weave into this hands-on instructional strategies. Third, lobby for specific conent changes to include the multicultural, the global, the heroic, as well as countervailing uninformed consumerism. Fourth, attend to: support systems; public awareness and teacher involvement; teacher preparation; and textbook adoption. Copies of the task force's survey form and interview schedule are included in separate appendices. (DB)

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SOCIAL STUDIES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD
Findings and Recommendations

OCSS PK-3 Task Force Report

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SOCIAL STUDIES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD
Findings and Recommendations

OCSS PK-3 Task Force Report

All I Ever Really Need To Know I Learned In Kindergarten*

Most of what I really need to know about how to live, and what to do, and how to be, I learned in kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate school mountain, but there in the sandbox at nursery school.

These are the things I learned: Share everything. Play fair. Don't hit people. Put things back where you found them. Clean up your own mess. Don't take things that aren't yours. Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody. Wash your hands before you eat. Flush. Warm cookies and milk are good for you. Live a balanced life. Learn some and think some and dance and play and work every day some.

Take a nap every afternoon. When you go out into the world, watch for traffic, hold hands and,stick together. Be aware of wonder. Remember the little seed in the plastic cup. The roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows how or why, but we are all like that.

Goldfish and hamsters and white mice and even the little seed in the plastic cup.....they all die. So do we.

And then remember the book about Dick and Jane and the first word you learned; the biggest word of all: LOOK! Everything you need to know is in there somewhere. The Golden Rule and love and basic sanitation; ecology and politics and sane living.

Think of what a better world it would be if we all.....the whole world.....had cookies and milk about 3 o'clock every afternoon and then lay down with our blankets for a nap. Or if we had a basic policy in our nation and other nations to always put things back where we found them and cleaned up our own messes. And it is still true, no matter how old you are, when you go out into the world, it is best to hold hands and stick together.

*By Robert Fulghum, Minister Emeritus, Edmonds, WA Unitarian Church. Published in the Portland Gray Panther Newsletter "Pulse".

Oregon Council for the Social Studies
2373 Kuebler Blvd. S • Salem, Oregon 97302
399-3261

October 1988

Dear Colleague:

The Executive Board of the Oregon Council for the Social Studies asked me to appoint a task force to study PK-3 social studies in Oregon and to make recommendations to the board related to what OCSS could do to help improve social studies education.

Dr. William "Rod" Fielder, Professor of Education at Oregon State University, agreed to chair the task force. Rod was joined by nine other educators from throughout Oregon. The task force began work early September 1987 and reported their findings to the OCSS Executive Board in April 1988.

The task force made four recommendations to the OCSS Executive Board. The board commended the task force for their scholarly effort and report and asked Dr. Fielder to chair another group with the task of considering specific plans of action in order to implement the four recommendations.

The implementation report is expected no later than December 1988. During the October 14, in-service social studies meeting being sponsored by OCSS at Lakeridge High School (Lake Oswego), Professor Fielder and others of the task force will conduct a session during which they will accept comments about the report and what steps OCSS should take to implement the recommendations. Each school district is encouraged to send a PK-3 representative to the session.

Three copies of this report are reprinted and distributed to each school district in Oregon through a generous contribution from Holt, Rinehart & Winston and Silver Burdett & Ginn. OCSS is grateful to these two companies for their support.

Sincerely,

Clifford L. Cook
President

Social Studies in Early Childhood: Findings and Recommendations

A Report by the PK-3 Task Force of
The Oregon Council For The Social Studies

JoAnn Brewer, Professor
Oregon State University

Rod Fielder, Professor
Oregon State University

Sara Fielder, Specialist
Linn County Head Start

Randy Hitz, Specialist
Oregon Dept. of Education

Mary Jean Katz, Specialist
Oregon Dept. of Education

Mary Klages, Teacher
Greater Albany School District

Rose Marie Marsh, Principal
Salem School District

Judy Miller, Teacher
Salem School District

Marty Turner, Professor
Southern Oregon State College

David Wright, Professor
Western Oregon State College

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Oregon Council for the Social Studies
2373 Kuebler Blvd. S • Salem, Oregon 97302
399-3261

July 20, 1987

TO: PK-3 Task Force
FROM: Clifford L. Cook
President

Charge to the Task Force

1. What is going on in PK-3 classrooms in social studies. And, how do you know that?

2. What ought to be going on in those classrooms, or what could be going on? How do you know that?

3. What can be done to improve social studies education in PK-3 and what can OCSS do to help in that effort?

Synopsis

The Task Force carried out the following activities in order to respond to the charge given by OCSS President, Cliff Cook.

First, we commissioned Marty Turner to do a review of contemporary and historic developments nationally. We asked Marty to track the dialogue between social studies and early childhood specialist. They were found to be quite separate domains with only occasional, incidental contact. And a price is paid for this insularity. Ms. Turner traced the rise of the prevailing curricula metaphor -- the expanding communities of man -- and how very little that controlling paradigm has been informed by either research on cognitive development or recognized good practices in the education of the young.

Randy Hitz was commissioned to do an interpretation of changing family demographics and its implications for social education. "A majority of minorities" is the arresting phrase used in the Hitz paper to show how changing demographics impact the schools and have particular reverberations in the social studies. Divorce rates, the gap between rich and poor, family mobility, expanding use of child care facilities, and still other developments are changing childhood and the school's role therein.

Almost 200 teachers and teachers-in-training were surveyed by the Task Force on state-wide inservice day Fall of 1987. The bulk of the teachers surveyed were from the Willamette Valley and the Portland Metropolitan area. According to our respondents, reading and writing are pre-eminent in the curriculum. Social studies ranks as a middle priority subject along with science and perhaps physical education. These teachers believe, however, that children should not be sheltered from knowledge about our conflictual adult world, and, indeed they see today's social problems as severe enough to require educational intervention at an early age. Nor do teachers believe social concepts are too complicated. Teachers are very divided in specifying content though there seems to be a tendency to assert that informal holiday studies are not enough and self development or self concept might be given greater play in the social studies. Because a number of teachers rebelled when asked to rank-order subjects by importance there is reason to believe that teachers of the young may strongly believe in the integration of equally important subject matter.

The fourth section of the report summarizes the results of twenty-four, hour-long interviews with individual teachers conducted by members of the Task Force. While two caveats are discussed at some length, we tentatively suggest that a separate social studies period has all but vanished from the school day. At best some teachers manage 15 minutes of instruction perhaps three times a week. We discussed content and found a mood of variance with wide swings from classroom to classroom in topics and priorities for the social studies. As noted in the survey section these teachers reflected considerable confusion regarding the question of just what is social studies. There was especially strong support in these interviews for the idea of curriculum integration and needed help with experiential or hands-on teaching strategies.

Recommendations

The Task Force offers four recommendations based on the findings:

1. Undertake efforts to clarify the purpose and parameters of the social studies. Why teach it? What are its boundaries?

2. Design ways to propagate experiential teaching materials and strategies. In particular, join forces with a latent curriculum integration movement among teachers and weave into this hands-on instructional strategies.

3. Lobby for specific content changes to include the multicultural, the global, the heroic, as well as countervailing uninformed consumerism.

4. Attend to support systems: public awareness and involvement; teacher preparation; textbook adoption.

SOCIAL STUDIES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: A Background Statement

Marty Turner, Professor
Southern Oregon State College

Historically, social studies has been a part of early childhood education. Early on, the 1800's social studies instruction stressed mastery of rudimentary subject-matter--largely historic, geographic, and civic in nature. In the 1900's a transformation of social studies in the early grades to a more child-centered approach resulted in organizing the curriculum around a "here and now" perspective. It was argued that using what was most familiar and accessible to the child met the needs of the child more fully and reflected an understanding of the intellectual and emotional development of younger students. Later this view was translated into an "expanding communities" organization of the curriculum. Originating from a widely-used textbook on methods in geography, the idea was proposed that social studies education should be taught sequentially "from the home and neighborhood outward first to the home state, then to the surrounding states, to the United States and to North America as a whole, later to Europe and the rest of the world" (McMurry 1926).

This expanding communities organization became entrenched with the publication of a 1935 social studies text series edited by Paul Hanna which was revised in the 1950s as the Basic Social Program. Primary grade material focused on the school, neighborhood, city, town and country. It was not until the sixth grade that students studied the world. The simplicity and seeming logic of this organization was attractive to educators and publishers alike but lacked a basis in educational or psychological research in child growth and development (LeRiche 1987). In fact studies of elementary school children's knowledge suggested that students already possessed much of the content covered in the expanding environments social studies curriculum (Kaltsounis 1964, Smith and Cardenell 1964). However a survey of current social studies curriculum guides and texts reveals that this organization continues to dominate as the accepted pattern for social studies instruction (Morrisett 1986, Larkins and Gilmore 1987).

The Nature of Social Studies

There is no singular definition of what the field of social studies encompasses and this has been a source of confusion for classroom teachers including Oregon's teachers of young children today. In 1977 a National Council for the Social Studies Bulletin divided social studies into three traditions: (1) citizenship transmission, (2) social science and (3) reflective inquiry. The first conception promotes the view that students should learn values and ideas which will help them participate in a democratic society; the second deals with concepts and processes derived from the various social science disciplines; the third emphasizes decision-making skills for social problems (Barr 1977).

The second definition has been incorporated into elementary methodology books and is used widely by early childhood educators. At the primary level social studies involves learning about themselves and others and how they interact with people and places. Using perspectives offered by the social science disciplines, children learn about the social groups to which they belong through anthropology and sociology, for instance, or about where and how they relate to their environment through geography (Hunkins 1932). Accordingly to that view, social studies is seen as more than a body of knowledge which emanate from the various disciplines. A more recent definition of social studies is based on the realities of the world which include current domestic and global issues and relevant coping skills (King 1987). Competing conceptions of what social studies is continue to provide confusion for the classroom teacher who is trying to determine what to teach to young students.

Social Studies Learning in the Young Child

Social studies content has long been considered a part of the more abstract, formal instruction of the elementary school curriculum. When asked about her view of elementary school, a middle school student replied that it "just taught us things that we already knew" (Larkins and Gilmore 1987). This criticism of formal education has been recently accompanied by more expert testimony regarding the nature of the young learner and appropriate instructional methods. George Sterne, chairman of the American Academy of Pediatrics' Committee of Early Childhood asserts that "children are learning virtually every waking moment" without formal instruction. He is joined by Samuel Sava, president of the National Association of Elementary School Principals, and David Elkind, executive director of the National Association for the education of Young Children, in identifying that the danger of pushing formal instruction on young children is that it thwarts their ability to explore their environment and kills their joy in learning (UPI 1987).

Concrete Activities

Basing his research on the Piagetian development theory, Hans Furth discovered that young children actively construct theories about their world. He noted that children learn from planned, concrete experiences which help them refine their notions of the nature of the real world (Furth 1980). However, Elkind has suggested that a social studies curriculum which is activity-based does not always have merit for children. He emphasizes that concrete activities should have meaning for the child in order for them to be worthwhile. This requires that teachers understand what is intuitively interesting to young children and build directed activities which have personal meaning to their students (Elkind 1931).

Play

Research indicates that children bring attitudes, unprocessed experiences and cognitive abilities to the classroom and teachers should be capitalizing on the young learner's perspective and ways of learning (Hinitz 1987). Much evidence supports the importance of play as one of the most effective ways young children learn. (Vygotsky 1976, Glickman 1979, Suransky 1983, Simmons and Brewer

1985). Elkind's admonition is again relevant as "Teachers have responsibility for providing play opportunities in which children can consolidate and make personally meaningful the experiences they have had" (Almy 1984).

Conceptual Learning

However, an emphasis on play as well as experiential learning does not mean that young children are incapable of absorbing abstract ideas. One study of second-graders showed achievement scores were enhanced through the use of higher-level thinking questions typical of social studies lessons (Buggey 1972). Three-and four-year old children were able to demonstrate the ability to solve prediction problems and accompany them with explanations for their reasoning (Blank, Rose, and Berlin 1981). In a study of the social development of young Australian children, the researcher found that they were capable of understanding social studies content that was much more sophisticated than what they were being taught in school (Stevens 1982). Studies have also shown that young children are able to handle various political concepts (Connell 1971, Damon 1977, Stevens 1982), geographic concepts (Sunal and Sunal 1978), historical concepts (Elkind 1981), economic concepts (Fox 1978) and sociocultural concepts (Walsh 1980, Thornburg 1981). It was further discovered that young children who participate in strong social studies programs do well on tests of basic skills which require comprehension of reading passages (McKenzie 1986).

Status of Social Studies in Early Childhood Education

Social studies receives very little emphasis in early childhood classrooms. Teachers feel there is "no time left" for social studies after skills in language arts and mathematics are addressed. Many teachers perceive social studies as a knowledge oriented, paper-and-pencil subject and not appropriate for the early elementary grades. Others do not regard it as a basic skill and therefore deem it unnecessary for inclusion in the early elementary curriculum.

Recent surveys of teacher attitudes toward social studies consistently suggest that social studies is not considered to be as important as other subjects and, as a result, so little time is being spent on social studies that it is in danger of being eliminated altogether (Joyce et al. 1982, Hahn 1985, Morrisett 1986). Coupled with poor teacher attitudes toward social studies are the research findings conducted among Oregon teachers that show a strong correlation between teacher interest and quality and students' attitudes. The result of teacher disinterest toward social studies is the pervasive feeling on the part of students that social studies is "boring" (Haladyna et al. 1982, Schug et al. 1984).

Research on current practices is more uneven. The most common finding is that social studies is taught by integrating it into daily routines and activities. Some teachers admit to a lack of interest in teaching social studies but more often they cite a lack of materials and guidelines as barriers to successful implementation of social studies. There are texts for primary level social studies but many teachers prefer to use materials they have developed themselves (Atwood 1987). The expanding environments organization exists in virtually every

state curriculum and in the most popular text series (Morrisett 1986, Larkins and Gilmore 1987). It is no surprise that topics most commonly cited by teachers include community helpers, families and neighborhoods. Teachers also interpret social studies as instruction in the effective domain with an emphasis on social development. Since social studies is not required subject like reading and mathematics, teachers tend to teach social studies related concepts as they emerge spontaneously from the lessons during the course of the day. Sometimes studies and celebrations of holiday customs are considered the social studies curriculum.

Demographic Trends: Social Studies Implications In Early Childhood Education

Randy Hitz, Specialist
Oregon Department of Education

Today's young children grow up in a world much different from the one their parents experienced as children. Mobility, high divorce rates, increasing numbers of minorities, technological changes, and a changing economy are just a few of the circumstances which create an environment difficult for adults and children to comprehend and manage. What's more, the changes take place so rapidly and so often that it seems the only thing we can count on is change itself. How do we prepare children for this ever-changing society? Is there a role for the social studies?

The purpose of this paper is to briefly outline some of the changes taking place in our society and raise questions about the role for social studies curriculum in schools for young children.

A Majority of Minorities

The State of California now has a majority of minorities in its elementary schools. Half of the 50 states have public school populations that are over 25% nonwhite. All of our 25 largest cities have: "minority majorities" in the city school systems. Oregon has lower-than-average but growing percentage of minority children. In Oregon, as in most other states, nearly all of the increases in the school-age population between 1985 and 1990 will be made up of minority children.

The greater percentages of minorities means greater diversity of races and cultures in our schools. What are we doing in the social studies to help young children learn about and appreciate different points of view and different cultures?

Changes in the Family

The days of Ozzie and Harriet and the Cleavers are gone for most families. In 1955, 60 percent of the households in the U.S. consisted of a working father, a housewife mother and two or more school age children. Over 55 percent of the children born today will live in a single parent home for at least part of their lives. At any given time, nearly 25 percent of all children in the U.S. actually live in a single parent family.

The high divorce rate (over 50%) and the large increase in teen pregnancies are major contributors to the changes in family structures. Twelve of every 100 children born each day are born out of wedlock. Another stunning statistic is that every day in the U.S. 40 teenage girls give birth to their third child. In Oregon, the percentage of births to unwed mothers has increased by 85 percent since 1975. Another result of the teen pregnancy problem and the divorce rate is that

many children grow up without the influence of a father. Some 50 percent of Black families, 33 percent of Hispanci families, and 15 percent of White families are female headed.

Study of the family is a major component of early childhood social studies curriculum in most schools. Has the curriculum kept up with the changes so that children recognize and appreciate different family structures? Many children live in single parent families. Some children are reared by grandparents or other relatives. A growing number of children live with step parents and this often involves living with the step parent's children too. What are educators doing to help children function better in diverse family structures?

Economic Changes

Nearly one out of every four children in America lives in poverty and half of all the poor in the U.S. are children. Employment has gone up since the beginning of this decade. But in many cases people are taking jobs for which they are terribly over qualified and which pay little. A growing number of mothers have entered the work force because they must in order to survive economically. Many of these women are the sole supporters of their families. Others work because their husbands make too little money to support the family. Indeed, a majority women who work outside the home, do so because the family needs supplementary income.

Robert Halpern predicts that in the coming years, close to a majority of families with young children will need public support at some time during their children's formative years. He goes on to say that, chronic economic insecurity, dilapidated housing, and inadequate social supports can overwhelm parents and prevent them from providing adequately for their children. This can lead to inattentive parenting which in turn denies young children the emotional security, role models and skills they will need to compete in an increasingly complex world.

Social studies curricula alone will not help children cope with poverty conditions. But shouldn't there be a place in the social studies curriculum to help children realize that their worth as human beings is not dependent on their economic status and ability to purchase material goods? Shouldn't there be a place in the curriculum for teaching children about the interdependence of all human beings? And, perhaps most importantly, shouldn't the social studies curriculum foster in children an appreciation for the need to help others?

Child Care

As a result of changes in the family structure and economic circumstances, more and more children are spending significant portions of each day in the care of someone other than a relative. A majority of mothers of preschool age children (those under age six) are working outside the home. Over 7 million preschool children need child care, yet less than 2 million slots are available in child care centers. Parents frequently find it difficult to locate quality child care at prices

they can afford. As a result, many parents place their children in totally unregulated care situations--in Oregon fifty-five percent of all children in child care are in totally unregulated day care homes--or they allow the children to care for themselves. There are at least four million school-age children in the U.S. who need care before and/or after school but must take care of themselves. These children are called "latch-key" children and there is an estimated 50,000 of them in Oregon.

Is there a place in the social studies curriculum for helping children cope with multiple caregivers in very different environments? How can we help children learn to live together in groups for 10 or more hours each day? How can children be helped to cope with having to care for themselves for extended periods of time?

Family Mobility

The average family in the U.S. moves 14 times and 20 percent of the American population moves each year. As families move, they often leave behind the relatives and friends who make up the informal support systems which can provide information and emotional reassurance. It means that children have no grandparents or other extended family members living nearby with whom they can interact. Consequently, many children have little opportunity to learn to relate to older people other than their parents. They also have little opportunity to observe or care for children younger than themselves.

The mobility of families also contributes to the instability of neighborhoods. Families who move frequently are less inclined to try to establish relationships with neighbors. As a result, neighbors and friends become less available to provide the support and experience for children which they had in a less mobile society. Children have fewer opportunities to play with children younger or older than themselves and they have fewer opportunities to relate to adults other than their parents.

Is there a place in the social studies curriculum for giving children an opportunity to interact with senior citizens, other adults, and children of different ages? Is there something we can do in the social studies curriculum to help children learn to be good friends and care for other people?

Cultural and Technological Changes

By the age of 16, the average child has spent more time watching television than s/he has spent in school. Add to this the time children spend listening to radio, records, and tapes, and playing video games and the disproportionate influence of the media on children's development becomes enormous. Neighbors, teachers, and family are becoming overshadowed by the media in their influence on children's development. In addition, time children spend engaged in the media is time away from true give-and-take interactions with people.

What can be done in the social studies curriculum to help children make the best use of the media and sort what is good from the trash? What can be done to balance the influence of teachers and parents with that of the media, especially in regards to children's development of values? How much emphasis should be placed on giving children time to relate to one another?

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Teacher Survey[1]

Rod Fielder, Professor
Oregon State University

The Population

A one-page survey form was distributed on state-wide inservice day Fall of 1987 at two professional meetings in Portland and Corvallis. Those returns were supplemented by surveys distributed in Education courses at Southern Oregon State College. All together 196 survey forms were returned. This report, however, includes only teachers and administrators; college students were not tallied unless they identified themselves as teachers taking a graduate class. Day Care and Pre-school returns were grouped together and tallied separately from K, 1, 2, 3 teachers. In this report these two groups are labled "pre-school" and "in-school" respectively.

Figure 1

Respondents Identified by Level of Instruction

Day Care	26	Kindergarten	38
Pre-School	33	First Grade	31
	59	Second Grade	12
		Third Grade	9
			90

Respondents were asked to identify "your town, city." The bulk of teachers identified cities or towns in the Willamette Valley, three cities in particular: Salem, Corvallis, and Eugene. The returns somewhat under-represent the Portland metropolitan area as well as the Coast, E. Oregon, and S. Oregon (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Respondents Identified by Geographic Region

Portland Metro	38
Willamette Valley	86
Coast	7
E. Oregon	8
S. Oregon	10

Readers are cautioned to remember this is not a scientific sampling of the views of Oregon teachers. The results presented below, therefore, are tentative and speculative in nature.

[1]A copy of the survey form is included in Appendix A.

The Findings

Views of Childhood. We asked teachers a set of four questions about their view of the child's world today -- race, television, social problems. Both in-school and pre-school teachers tend to believe young children are "not aware of color or race, not prejudiced" (see Table 1). However, teachers from both groups commented that the question should have separated awareness of race and ethnicity from prejudice itself.

TABLE 1

1. Young children are not aware of color or race. They are not prejudiced.

	agree				disagree
	1	2	3	4	5
pre-school	16	12	14	12	5
in-school	22	24	11	21	12

As best we know very young children are certainly aware of ethnic, race, and class differences, and, in many cases are actively prejudiced. The teacher views reported here, being somewhat to the contrary, are disturbing in that the nation if not Oregon seem to be diversifying in the direction of a "majority of minorities" mentioned earlier under Demographics.

A Sheltered Curriculum. However, neither pre-school nor in-school teachers believe young children should be protected educationally. Rather, these teachers tend to believe education regarding social problems must begin early (see TABLE 2 and TABLE 4). This finding is of acute interest in light of the fact that the prevailing curriculum paradigm, the expanding communities of man model, seems to have the effect of preventing older children from studying the conflictual here and now while also sentimentalizing home, school, and neighborhood for young children.

TABLE 2

2. Young children should be protected from knowledge about social conflict in the adult world today.

	agree				disagree
	1	2	3	4	5
pre-school	2	8	17	24	8
in-school	0	8	14	40	28

TABLE 4

4. Today's social problems (AIDS, teenage pregnancy, etc.) are so severe we must begin to educate children at a young age.

	agree 1	2	3	4	disagree 5
pre-school	23	10	11	9	6
in-school	27	27	20	9	7

Television. Teachers generally believe that television has had an impact on childhood (see TABLE 3). Several respondents commented that while the medium has impacted childhood the effects are often mistaken and anxiety producing.

TABLE 3

3. Television has changed childhood--they know so much more about the world out there.

	agree 1	2	3	4	disagree 5
pre-school	32	13	9	1	3
in-school	41	26	11	4	8

No Social Studies? We then asked a series of four questions that would permit teachers to say that formal social studies instruction is not really needed, the content is too complex and informal, situational teaching can do the job anyway. Teachers strongly disagree (see TABLES 5, 6).

TABLE 5

5. No formal social studies instruction is necessary for young children since their whole school day is social in nature.

	agree 1	2	3	4	disagree 5
pre-school	1	2	7	19	30
in-school	2	6	9	37	36

TABLE 6

6. Most formal social studies concepts are simply too complicated for young children to understand.

	agree				disagree
	1	2	3	4	5
pre-school	4	7	15	15	18
in-school	2	15	24	33	26

Informal and Formal Instruction. Our two questions trying to get at the issue of seatwork versus playing store did not yield clear results. Our mistake might have been in thinking dichotomously thus posing an either/or instructional choice. Perhaps teachers of young children see the issue as a question of providing the right quality and mix of both informal and formal instruction, but somewhat favoring the informal (see TABLES 7, 8).

TABLE 7

7. Social studies instruction is often informal and situational (playing store, playing house, etc.).

	agree				disagree
	1	2	3	4	5
pre-school	26	16	12	3	2
in-school	22	32	19	10	7

TABLE 8

8. Social studies instruction is often formal or direct (discussing a story, coloring a hand-out, etc.).

	agree				disagree
	1	2	3	4	5
pre-school	14	10	19	12	4
in-school	11	20	32	23	4

Priorities. We tried to devise a set of questions around priorities for the social studies--at the core is it this; is it that? Teachers in this sample do not believe the mandate for the

social studies for young children is limited to brief studies of holidays, etc. Furthermore, there is a consensus that the development of selfhood is an important priority (see TABLES 9, 12).

TABLE 9

9. The content of the social studies for young children should be limited to occasional brief studies of holidays, home, famous people, and community.

	agree 1	2	3	4	disagree 5
pre-school	1	6	6	26	21
in-school	10	5	10	28	37

TABLE 12

12. Social studies is essentially self-development (social skills and awareness including self-concept).

	agree 1	2	3	4	disagree 5
pre-school	7	21	19	5	4
in-school	18	28	31	9	4

The Barr, Shermis, and Barth report asserts that social studies is essentially civic in nature. Still others argue for the centrality of history and geography. While yet others argue for conveying the democratic heritage as the true banner for the social studies to march under. Our results do not clearly affirm any of these priorities but instead give some signs of rejecting both the cultural transmission as well as the history/geography priorities for the social studies (see TABLES 10, 11, 13).

TABLE 10

10. Social studies is essentially cultural transmission; conveying the democratic heritage.

	agree 1	2	3	4	disagree 5
pre-school	6	3	27	13	10
in-school	9	17	29	25	10

TABLE 11

11. Social studies is essentially history and geography instruction.

	agree 1	2	3	4	disagree 5
pre-school	3	4	21	12	19
in-school	4	8	21	27	30

TABLE 13

13. Social studies is essentially civic in nature (citizenship development, decision-making skills, etc.).

	agree 1	2	3	4	disagree 5
pre-school	8	15	23	8	2
in-school	17	22	31	16	4

Note the slight disagreement reported in TABLE 13. In-school teachers seem more of mind that social studies is civic in nature than do pre-school teachers.

Rank Order of Subjects. Finally, we tried to determine social studies' ranking compared with other subjects. The assumption behind this question was that high-ranked subjects may command more instructional time, emphasis, and teacher energy than do low-ranked subjects. More than once I have been told that, "In today's pressure cooker schools, teachers need time to kick back and put their feet up on the desk, so to speak, and a good choice is the social studies so don't make it instructionally demanding."

Answering our question, however, caused some teachers to rebel. They could not bring themselves to rank order subjects believing, as many remarked, "They all are important." Consequently, 11 in-school teacher surveys could not be tallied and 16 pre-school

teacher surveys had to be dropped. Still, this left us with 79 and 43 viable responses which we tallied (see TABLE 14).

TABLE 14

Please rank order (with 1 being the most important) the following eight areas of instruction.

	Most important 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Least important 8
Music								
pre-school	0	6	6	4	2	8	12	5
in-school	0	2	2	7	11	15	25	17
Art								
pre-school	3	6	2	4	6	3	6	13
in-school	1	1	1	5	7	18	20	26
Science								
pre-school	0	1	2	8	14	4	4	10
in-school	0	1	2	20	25	13	14	4
Social Studies								
pre-school	11	2	4	10	6	2	5	3
in-school	3	1	10	19	23	11	5	7
Reading								
pre-school	24	5	2	2	4	4	1	1
in-school	71	3	1	1	1	1	0	1
P.E.								
pre-school	3	5	2	6	6	16	3	2
in-school	0	2	2	20	10	17	10	18
Writing								
pre-school	2	13	14	2	2	1	5	4
in-school	2	33	33	2	1	2	1	5
Arithmetic								
pre-school	0	6	12	9	3	5	3	5
in-school	2	35	28	6	2	1	4	1

As shown in TABLE 14, reading and writing are pre-eminent in the curriculum according to these respondents. The only challenge to the preeminence of the language arts is offered by arithmetic--is it second or third in importance? While the results are slightly ambiguous, social studies seems to rank somewhat as a middle pri-

ority subject along with science and perhaps physical education. Subjects of lesser importance in the minds of these teachers are music and art. Pre-school teachers, however, gave slightly higher rankings to art and music than did in-school teachers. Keep in mind thought that 27 surveys were not tallied here and as a group these 27 objected to ranking either on the grounds of "integration of subjects" or that all subjects had a place in the sun. Perhaps this minority stands more staunchly behind art and music.

Teacher Interviews

Members of the PK-3 Task Force each agreed to interview three teachers. Accordingly, a "Site Visit Interview Schedule" was prepared to provide a common structure (A copy of the Site Visit Interview Schedule is included in Appendix B). Twenty-four teachers were interviewed, most of them teaching in the Willamette Valley.

In discussing the interview results the Task Force was very much of a mind that the findings were probably skewed for at least three reasons. First, the Task Force interviewers were perceived by teachers as people highly interested in social studies instruction or even as social studies "activists". No doubt the replies we received were crafted in part with this perception in mind. Second, in turning to teachers we knew individually or in asking administrators to arrange interviews, more often than not we ended up in classrooms where social studies instruction was a special attribute or interest of the teacher being queried. Taken as a whole then, these interviews probably suggest a livelier, healthier scenario or a more favorable case for social studies instructional practices in Oregon today than is likely in most classrooms. Finally, our small sample under-represents pre-school teachers. Virtually all of our conclusions grow out of extended talks with kindergarten to grade three teachers operating within the public schools.

Time For Social Studies?

After a warm-up opening question we tried to collect specific information on the issue of whether social studies instruction is contracting (perhaps under pressure to make time for "basics") or whether it is expanding (perhaps under pressure to respond to contemporary social ills and needs). The results of the interviews are decidedly mixed and the complicating factors are discussed below. However, the Task Force very tentatively suggests three findings:

- No, social studies is not a high priority area for teachers;
- Yes, a separate social studies period has all but vanished from the school day;
- Maybe, 15 minutes 3 times a week is what some teachers give to social studies as a separate subject.

But, the first complicating factor in the findings above is the issue of purpose and parameters -- just what is the social studies anyway and what are its boundaries? Since social studies is such a mushy field it is open to the widest of interpretations. Some teachers define social studies as socialization -- teaching children to sit still, follow directions, take turns, raise their hands, and such. Still other teachers align the social studies closely with health education especially in matters of identity, self-concept, safety, working in groups, and such. For example, several teachers mentioned the work of the school counselor in their rooms as part of their social studies program. Finally, because the social studies can mean so many different things, most teachers mentioned prominently their

own special interests as subject matter -- handicapping conditions, slide shows of various countries visited, world peace, environmental issues are specific examples.

It may be that social studies is not "policed" in the same way reading instruction is. Thus teachers are freer in the social studies to construct their own individual programs. Probably a high majority of parents closely monitor whether their child is learning to read or not and many communicate their appraisals in clear terms to schools. Even if parents do not "police" the results of reading instruction, contemporary testing programs do. It may be the case, then, that because social studies instruction is not closely monitored, that condition permits a continuing loose definition for the field.

The second complicating factor is determining social studies' place in the school day is the issue of curriculum integration. Many teachers of young children hold passionate views about the instructional strategy of integrating a wide variety of subject matters into a single study. However, under "integration" it is easy to describe social studies as an adjunct to the language arts -- "It's a natural place to develop reading, writing, and speaking skills." This often repeated phrase can convey the feeling of a neutral content area, the social studies, useful not in its own right but justified as a sort of curricular jungle gym where the really important, advanced skills of reading and writing get practiced. Still, the time pressure on teachers are very real, and the pedagogical power of "curriculum integration" is persuasive. This may be an area where OCSS may be of genuine service both to teachers and to itself. For one thing, teachers seem to rally to "curriculum integration" as a way of making their teaching more experiential and less ditto sheet or workbook oriented. Moreover it seems to be happening in classrooms whether or not OCSS chooses to be a part of the movement.

The Social Studies Curriculum?

We talked with teachers about what is covered in the social studies at this level. We also inquired as to whether this coverage was somewhat spontaneous and incidental or whether it was preplanned, set, and structured.

These teachers did not seem to find district curriculum guides meaningful or helpful. More telling, not one teacher mentioned OCSS' 1987 report, Shaping Oregon's Social Studies. What actually shaped what got taught was either the adopted textbook series, or, the interests and priorities of individual teachers. The mood here is one of variance, wide swings from classroom to classroom in topics and priorities for the social studies. Unlike reading or arithmetic instruction, "Social studies varies from nothing to something depending on the school and the teacher," as one informant phrased it.

If there is a structure it is old, reliable "expanding communities of man" idea popularized by Paul Hanna in the Virginia Course of Study, Circa 1930. A small number of our teachers complained that many of the teachings under these topics (home, school, community) failed to interest or challenge their students. They cited personal success in teaching more complicated ideas than those found in their curriculum guides or texts.

These teachers divided themselves rather evenly on the issue of structure versus spontaneity depending on how strongly the adopted text figure in their replies to our questions. Teachers mentioning textbooks generally were a little more specific, more elaborate, and more sequential in discussing the content of what they taught. Also, teachers mentioning a text series were much more likely to mention geography specifically as area for direct instruction.

Materials and Practices

We told our informants we were interested in how they went about teaching the social studies. We asked them to describe what they did.

As you would expect from a somewhat select group of teachers believing they were talking to social studies activities and probably themselves somewhat more active in this area than most teachers, almost every strategy was mentioned, almost every kind of instructional material was identified for use. There were few exceptions -- only one teacher mentioned ditto sheet packets prominently and no teacher confessed, "I have the class read the text and answer the questions." While several teachers hinted at ethical or moral issues only one mentioned values clarification as a strategy. What were mentioned frequently were field trips, pictures, guests, drawing, talking time, stories, and crafts. Collectively these frequently mentioned practices lean toward experiential learning, a theme that figures strongly in the section below.

What Should Go On?

We told these teachers we were charged with making recommendations to OCSS and we invited them to tell us what we should say.

One teacher seemed to capture the mood of these interviews with the statement, "I don't think you can say social studies should be taught for twenty minutes a day." Instead, that teacher and most others talked of curriculum integration. To illustrate, another teacher reported, "I teach by themes. They are umbrella in nature. For instance, 'Insects' is one. I have the children write their own math problems, study scientific information about them, look at the social nature of insects, that is, the dependence of insects on each other, the division of work, and their communication systems. Then I relate it to our own community." Generally these teachers called for curriculum integration (1) because of time constraints in the school day, (2) because it is more meaningful and makes a lasting impact on the student, and (3) because integration seems to lend itself more to experiential learning and less to textbooks and fill-in-the-blanks workbooks.

Several teachers elaborated on the need for help in designing "hands on" learning experiences. This second theme almost equaled the curriculum integration call for help from teachers.

Still other teachers directly challenged the content for early childhood social studies and the hold the "expanding communities of man" approach has on today's content. Some spoke through the "curriculum integration" idea because it quite naturally challenges conventional definitions of topics for social studies. Several teachers indicated content they would advocate. The wider world was mentioned several times with teachers saying that children can handle cross-cultural comparisons both within the United States (Native American studies, for example) and abroad (families in Asian or African countries, for example). Additionally, several teachers felt there ought to be a stronger more systematic "current events" strand in the social studies. While it was not articulated explicitly, it is apparent that young children are impacted by news of social ills and routine violence portrayed on television and in film but have little opportunity to work through their understanding of and feelings about these events.

Recommendations

Recommendation One: Clarify Parameters And Purpose

The Task Force finds that there is a clear and present danger that social studies instruction is either (1) pushed out of the school day as the "basics" command more time, or, (2) melded into an amorphous package including socialization, self concept, holidays, or other topics having only a loose rationale variously interpreted by particular teachers. Both changes arise from confusion about what social studies is and why it has a place in the curriculum.

The Turner review of the national scene, the Oregon survey results, and the interviews with individual teachers indicate a profound concern about a mandate grown so large and encompassing so many lofty but vague sentiments that no clear conviction remains of exactly what social studies is in the early grades. The social studies appears bloated -- puffed up to include nearly everything. The social studies appears wispy -- so jargon filled it is hard to locate its substance.

What are the boundaries of social studies content? What purpose or goals discipline that content? These are two questions teachers want help with. It is our recommendation that the OCSS devise a set of strategies to respond to this need to clarify purpose and establish parameters for the social studies in the early years.

In pursuing the above recommendations OCSS or its designate will encounter the dominate paradigm outlining the content for the social studies -- the expanding communities of man, i.e., from home to school to neighborhood and on. As Turner has shown earlier, this does not square with research on cognitive development, social development, nor effective learning settings for young children. Nonetheless, various interpretations of home-school-neighborhood constitute the conventional wisdom regarding early social studies content definition. California, among other states, has seriously challenged that definition. Oregon may need to consider doing so too.

Allied too with the problem of definition of social studies is the technique of integration. One way of keeping the social studies in the curriculum is the strategy of integrating it and other subject fields around a topic of high interest or relevance. There is strong teacher interest in re-defining the social studies so as to integrate it with other fields with a view toward saving time, finding content of high interest, and allowing for the further application of skills which must show up well on testing programs.

Recommendation Two: Propagate Experiential Teaching Strategies

There is sharp disagreement abroad in early childhood education. One set of educators (as well as some entrepreneurs) are promising a more rigorous, academic fare in the early years. The State of Georgia, for example, now requires formal exit testing from kindergarten to qualify for entry into first grade. Various church schools, private academies, day-care centers offer parents an accelerated,

often paper and pencil oriented learning program. But other educators take a contrary view. These latter programs staunchly support experiential, play oriented, exploration and choice-based instruction with emphasis on music, art, movement, story, and communication rather than direct, formal instruction. The information complied here reflects a strong bias toward the latter point of view -- the teachers represented here request help with devising experiential approaches to the social studies.

Time after time teachers called our attention to the relatively high level of abstraction, the remoteness, and the "verbalness" of the social studies. They find it difficult to hold the attention of young children given this stipulated content. They find it difficult to devise meaningful instruction, and they are often at a loss to document learning gains. We recommend, therefore, that the OCSS devise ways to increase its attention to instructional practices, particularly experiential teaching strategies.

Allied with this recommendation is our increasing awareness of cooperative learning strategies. Many of the precepts and practices in this newly popular field can be thought of as experiential. Moreover, they often lend themselves especially well to the content and purposes of the social studies. The Task Force further recommends that OCSS devise a program giving attention to cooperative learning strategies in the social studies for young children.

Recommendation Three: Support Particular Content Change

The content of a social studies curriculum should meet the needs of the young child and, at the same time time, prepare the young for their role as the next generation of citizen decision-makers. Content should emerge from the social issues which will impact the future and from the application of the list of appropriate practices provided by the National Association of the Education of the Young Child. Practicing early childhood educators have identified specific areas which they feel should be addressed at this level. These area recommendations come out of a dissatisfaction with the traditional pattern of social studies curriculum and a desire to incorporate the current assumptions about how young children learn. They also reflect a balance of the cognitive and effective aspects that social studies curriculum has to offer.

PEOPLE WHO MADE A DIFFERENCE -- Role models are a very strong influence on the young. A quick survey of who are the heros of today's children yields a list of superhumans and media celebrities. The existence of real, historic heroes and shapers of destiny is hidden in the social studies curriculum under the category of "enrichment" or "additional activities" related to a study of social science concepts. We propose that the heroes as well as ordinary agents in local, world, and national events become a major part of the organization of social studies education for the young. A balance of these real people with the idealized persons young children encounter in their fantasy worlds may contribute to a more realistic understanding of the possibilities for their own futures.

THE AGGRESSIVE CONSUMER SOCIETY -- Ask any child what they want for a birthday present and you will get a litany of the latest games and toys which are being promoted in the media. Many of these toys encourage aggressive interaction between players, witness the latest rage with laser guns that can shoot at hostile forces depicted on the television monitor. Children are a key target audience for their purchasing power and adults are left with the responsibility of responding to requests and demands from children susceptible to pressure-laden advertisement. However, these same children can develop discriminatory power and critical thinking skills to help them discern myth and reality, fantasy and fact and to base their decision-making on familial values. The social studies curriculum can be a place where the dominance of unbridled consumerism and aggression-oriented toys can be countervailed with inquiry into choice and reason.

MULTICULTURAL AND GLOBAL CONCERN -- The demographic data on the emerging "majority of minorities" compels a concern for educating children early regarding their roles as citizens in a pluralistic society. The data also suggest that on a global level, young children should be made aware not only of differences in lifestyles among people of the world but the similarities of human living patterns to their own culture. Children form their attitudes and opinions about other people in the world by the age of seven. Young children need exposure to international and multicultural issues in order to develop a perspective that allows them to take the viewpoint of others in the world and to see themselves as others see them.

Recommendation Four: Attend to Support Systems

Teacher education in Oregon is moving to fifth year, graduate program of study. What the impact will be on curriculum areas, such as the social studies, is hard to fathom. OCSS will need to monitor and perhaps intervene or lobby as new teacher education programs emerge in the next several months. University program planners face the same problems encountered by the primary teachers, viz. There is no time to do it all; what can safely be left out or integrated with something else?

The new social studies of the sixties failed, it is said, because of two things: (1) in-service training of teachers and (2) public apathy, resistance, or controversy. The social studies is a controversial subject in the curriculum. A continuing need therefore, and one OCSS has not explicitly responded to is the need to educate, inform, and sell the general public on the importance of the social studies in the curriculum.

Some teachers believe the present textbook selection rules are dysfunctional where they specify that only K-6 programs can be adopted. Much more flexibility in obtaining high impact materials might result if Oregon could approve less than whole series textbook adoption. This is especially important when one discovers that it is the upper grade teachers that often prevail in finally deciding the series that will be used in the K, 1, 2, 3 classroom (as well as their own).

EARLY CHILDHOOD SOCIAL STUDIES SURVEY

Appendix A

The Oregon Council for the Social Studies is studying the role of social studies instruction in the ives of young children. Your opinion will inform and help shape that report. Please help us by . ompleting the survey below:

___Teacher
___Parent
___Administrator
___Student
(check one)

I live in:
_____
(your town, city)

I work in or am associated with:
___Day Care
___Pre-school
___Kindergarten
___First Grade (check one)
___Second Grade
___Third Grade

Please mark the level of your agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS	1 agree	2	3	4	5 disagree
1. Young children are not aware of color or race. They are not prejudiced.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Young children should be protected from knowledge about social conflict in the adult world today.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Television has changed childhood--they know so much more about the world out there.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Today's social problems (AIDS, teenage pregnancy, etc.) are so severe we must begin to educate children at a young age.	1	2	3	4	5
5. No formal social studies instruction is necessary for young children since their whole school day is social in nature.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Most formal social studies concepts are simply too complicated for young children to understand.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Social studies instruction is often informal and situational (playing store, playing house, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
8. Social studies instruction is often formal or direct (discussing a story, coloring a hand-out, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
CONTENT EMPHASIS					
9. The content of the social studies for young children should be limited to occasional brief studies of holidays, home, famous people, and community.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Social studies is essentially cultural transmission; conveying the democratic heritage.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Social studies is essentially history and geography instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Social Studies is essentially self-development (social skills and awareness including self-concept).	1	2	3	4	5
13. Social studies is essentially civic in nature (citizenship development, decision-making skills, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5

INSTRUCTIONAL PRIORITIES

Please rank order (with 1 being the most important) the following eight areas of instruction.

___Music
___Art
___Science
___Social Studies
___Reading (including pre-reading activities)
___Physical Education (including health)
___Writing (including readiness activities)
___Arithmetic

Rod Fielder, Education
Oregon State University
Corvallis, Oregon 97331

Please write us a note on the back of this survey if you have further thoughts on the role of social studies instruction in early childhood education. Thanks for the help.

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Appendix B

PK-3 Ad Hoc Social Studies Committee
Site Visit Interview Schedule

Name	Interviewer
School or Site	Today's Date
Age Level or Grade	

1. (Warm Up) Tell me about your (children, students, this class).
   - 1.1 Home background, economic level
   - 1.2 Parent hopes, interests, pressures
   - 1.3 Social studies-like interests, activities, learning

2. (Time for Social Studies) Across the nation and across Oregon we seem to be of two minds -- Less social studies or no social studies because math, reading, etc. are so important, versus, more social studies because today's social problems are so severe. What is your position?
   - 2.1 How much time for (what is the place of) social studies in your program?
   - 2.2 What would you say generally about programs at this level -- social studies expanding, contracting, or staying the same?

3. (Topics/Curriculum) What is covered in the social studies at this level?
    - 3.1 Are there guidelines set up, a suggested or required curriculum? What is in it?
    - 3.2 How does the year develop? What do you do first?
    - 3.3 Is social studies somewhat incidental, spontaneous, keyed to children's interests or is it more pre-planned, set, and structured?

4. (Materials/Practices) We're interested in how you go about teaching in the social studies. Could you describe what you do?
    - 4.1 (Probe for prominent materials used) texts, picture books, recordings, etc.
    - 4.2 (Probe for teaching practices) Role playing, field trips, story time, talking time, holidays, etc.
    - 4.3 Some teachers try to kill several birds with one stone -- a storybook, for example, helps children learn to read and speak as well as, perhaps, absorb social studies. Is integration important at your level? How so? Themes?

5. (What Should Be Going On?) Our committee will make recommendations to the Oregon Council for the Social Studies. Do you have any ideas along these lines?
    - 5.1 Recall the curriculum integration question above (4.3).
    - 5.2 What should we say about time for social studies?
    - 5.3 What should we say about content (topics or curriculum)? Is something over-emphasized, left out, covered poorly?
    - 5.4 What recommendations should we make about materials provided? About teaching itself?
    - 5.5 Anything else?

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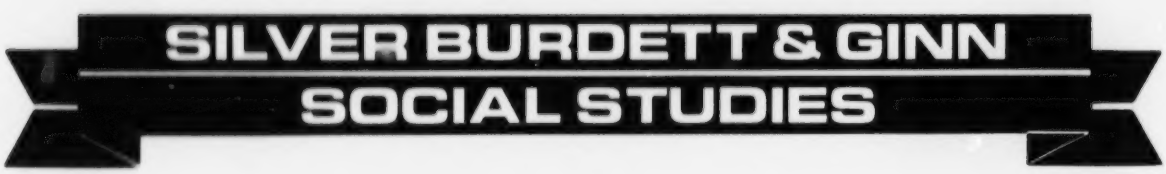

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